which expresses support for the designation and goals of "Hire a Veteran Week" and encourages the President to issue a proclamation supporting those goals. Certain technical abilities, discipline, teamwork, and commitment to getting a job done right the first time are among the unique skills, experiences, and qualities that our veterans possess as a result of their military service.

Civilian employers recognize these attributes as valuable to their companies. It is essential that the benefits of hiring a veteran be promoted in order to ensure that veterans are fully considered for civilian jobs upon separating from the U.S. Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, many veterans experience difficulty finding employment following their service in the U.S. Armed Forces. H. Con. Res. 125 and "Hire a Veteran Week" represent a commitment to improving the civilian professional and economic opportunities for the dedicated men and women who have worn our country's uniform.

I urge support for H. Con. Res. 125.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 125.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H. Con. Res. 125.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 125.

The question was taken; and (twothirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS ACT OF 2006

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3082) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require that 9 percent of procurement contracts entered into by the Department of Veterans Affairs be awarded to small business concerns owned by veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3082

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006".
- (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:
- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SMALL BUSINESS

Sec. 101. Department of Veterans Affairs goals for participation by small businesses owned and controlled by veterans in procurement contracts

Sec. 102. Department of Veterans Affairs contracting priority for veteranowned small businesses.

Sec. 103. Effective date.

TITLE II—MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

- Sec. 201. Eligibility of Indian tribal organizations for grants for the establishment of veterans cemeteries on trust lands.
- Sec. 202. Repeal of expiration and expanded application of Department of Veterans Affairs benefit for Government markers or headstones for marked graves of veterans buried in private cemeteries.
- Sec. 203. Provision of Government memorial headstones or markers and memorial inscriptions for deceased dependent children of veterans whose remains are unavailable for burial.

TITLE III—VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Sec. 301. Professional qualifications for disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives.

Sec. 302. Rules for part-time employment for disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives.

Sec. 303. State licensing and certification programs for veterans.

Sec. 304. Training of new disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives by NVTI required.

Sec. 305. Matters for inclusion in annual report on VETS program.

Sec. 306. Demonstration project on contracting for placement of certain disabled veterans.

Sec. 307. Performance incentive awards for employment service offices.

Sec. 308. Department of Labor implementation of priority of service for veterans requirement.

Sec. 309. Demonstration project on credentialing and licensure of veterans.

TITLE IV—EDUCATION

Sec. 401. Exception for institutions offering Government-sponsored nonaccredited courses to requirement of refunding unused tuition.

Sec. 402. Extension of work-study allowance. Sec. 403. Report on improvement in administration of educational assistance benefits.

Sec. 404. Restoration of lost entitlement for individuals who had to discontinue a course of education because of being ordered to full-time National Guard duty.

Sec. 405. Technical amendments.

TITLE I—SMALL BUSINESS

SEC. 101. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION BY
SMALL BUSINESSES OWNED AND
CONTROLLED BY VETERANS IN PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§8127. Small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans; Department contracting goals and preferences

"(a) CONTRACTING GOALS.—(1) In order to increase contracting opportunities for small busi-

ness concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities, the Secretary shall—

"(A) establish a goal for each fiscal year for participation in Department contracts (including subcontracts) by small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans who are not veterans with service-connected disabilities in accordance with paragraph (2): and

"(B) establish a goal for each fiscal year for participation in Department contracts (including subcontracts) by small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with serviceconnected disabilities in accordance with paragraph (3).

"(2) The goal for a fiscal year for participation under paragraph (1)(A) shall be determined by the Secretary.

"(3) The goal for a fiscal year for participation under paragraph (1)(B) shall be not less than the Government-wide goal for that fiscal year for participation by small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities under section 15(g)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(g)(1)).

"(4) The annual performance review of the senior official of each Administration of the Department and each Assistant Secretary of the Department with procurement authority shall include an assessment of whether or not that official or Assistant Secretary met the contracting goals established pursuant to this subsection during the year for which the performance review is conducted with respect to contracts awarded during that year for which that official or Assistant Secretary had responsibility. If the official or Assistant Secretary is found not to have met such contracting goals, the official or Assistant Secretary shall not receive an award known as a performance award or an award known as a presidential rank award for that year.

"(5) In the case of a subcontract of a Department contract that is counted for purposes of meeting a goal established pursuant to this section, the Secretary shall conduct a review of the contract and subcontract to verify that the subcontract was actually awarded to a business concern that may be counted for purposes of meeting that goal.

"(6) The Secretary shall maintain a list based on the reviews conducted under paragraph (5) that contains the name of the contractor associated with each contract reviewed under that paragraph and whether each subcontract awarded by the contractor that is counted for purposes of meeting a goal established pursuant to this section was actually awarded to and performed by a business concern that may be counted for purposes of meeting that goal. The Secretary shall make such list publicly available

"(b) USE OF NONCOMPETITIVE PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN SMALL CONTRACTS.—For purposes of meeting the goals under subsection (a), and in accordance with this section, in entering into a contract with a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans for an amount less than the simplified acquisition threshold (as defined in section 4 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 403)), a contracting officer of the Department may use procedures other than competitive procedures.

"(c) SOLE SOURCE CONTRACTS FOR CONTRACTS ABOVE SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION THRESHOLD.—For purposes of meeting the goals under subsection (a), and in accordance with this section, a contracting officer of the Department may award a contract to a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans using procedures other than competitive procedures if—

"(1) such concern is determined to be a responsible source with respect to performance of such contract opportunity; "(2) the anticipated award price of the contract (including options) will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (as defined in section 4 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 403)) but will not exceed \$5,000,000; and

"(3) in the estimation of the contracting officer, the contract award can be made at a fair and reasonable price that offers best value to

the United States.

"(d) USE OF RESTRICTED COMPETITION.—Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), for purposes of meeting the goals under subsection (a), and in accordance with this section, a contracting officer of the Department shall award contracts on the basis of competition restricted to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans if the contracting officer has a reasonable expectation that two or more small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans will submit offers and that the award can be made at a fair and reasonable price that offers best value to the United States.

"(e) ELIGIBILITY OF SMALL BUSINESS CON-CERNS.—A small business concern may be awarded a contract under this section only if the small business concern and the veteran owner of the small business concern are listed in the database of veteran-owned businesses maintained by the Secretary under subsection (f).

"(f) DATABASE OF VETERAN-OWNED BUSI-NESSES.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) through (6), the Secretary shall maintain a database of small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and the veteran owners of such

business concerns.

"(2) To be eligible for inclusion in the database, such a veteran shall submit to the Secretary such information as the Secretary may require with respect to the small business concern or the veteran.

"(3) Information maintained in the database shall be submitted on a voluntary basis by such

veterans.

"(4) In maintaining the database, the Secretary shall carry out at least the following two verification functions:

"(A) Verification that each small business concern listed in the database is owned and controlled by veterans.

"(B) In the case of a veteran who indicates a service-connected disability, verification of the service-disabled status of such veteran.

"(5) The Secretary shall make the database available to all Federal departments and agencies and notify each such department and agency of the availability of the database.

"(6) If the Secretary determines that the public dissemination of certain types of information maintained in the database is inappropriate, the Secretary shall take such steps as are necessary to maintain such types of information in a secure and confidential manner.

"(g) ENFORCEMENT PENALTIES FOR MISREPRE-SENTATION.—Any small business concern that is determined by the Secretary to have misrepresented the status of that concern as a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans or as a small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans for purposes of this subsection shall be debarred from contracting with the Department for a period of five years.

"(h) TREATMENT OF BUSINESSES AFTER DEATH OF VETERAN-OWNER.—(1) If the death of a veteran causes a small business concern to be less than 51 percent owned by one or more veterans, the surviving spouse of such veteran who acquires ownership rights in such small business concern shall, for the period described in paragraph (2), be treated as if the surviving spouse were that veteran for the purpose of maintaining the status of the small business concern as a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans.

"(2) The period referred to in paragraph (1) is the period beginning on the date on which the veteran dies and ending on the earliest of the following dates:

"(A) The date on which the surviving spouse remarries.

"(B) The date on which the surviving spouse relinquishes an ownership interest in the small business concern.

"(C) The date that is ten years after the date of the veteran's death.

"(3) The death of a veteran-owner of a small business concern or a surviving spouse of such a veteran-owner who acquires ownership rights in such concern shall not be cause for termination of a contract awarded under this section that is in effect at the time of death of such owner or surviving spouse.

"(i) CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL.—(1) Except as provided in subsection (h), if a small business concern that is awarded a contract under this section undergoes a change in management or control during the period for which the contract is in effect such that it is no longer a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans, the Secretary shall end the contract on the date on which the performance of the term of the contract is complete.

"(2) Such a contract that contains an option or options to extend the contract may be extended for a total of not more than 1 year pursuant to any such option.

"(j) PRIORITY FOR CONTRACTING PREF-ERENCES.—Preferences for awarding contracts to small business concerns shall be applied in the following order of priority:

"(1) Contracts awarded pursuant to subsection (b), (c), or (d) to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with serviceconnected disabilities.

"(2) Contracts awarded pursuant to subsection (b), (c), or (d) to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans that are not covered by subparagraph (4).

"(3) Contracts awarded pursuant to—

"(A) section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(a)); or

"(B) section 31 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 657a).

"(4) Contracts awarded pursuant to any other small business contracting preference.

"(k) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Not later than 60 days after the last day of a fiscal quarter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on small business contracting during that fiscal quarter, which shall include the following:

"(1) The percentage of the total amount of all contracts awarded by the Department during that fiscal quarter that were awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans.

"(2) The percentage of the total amount of all such contracts awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities.

"(3) The percentage of the total amount of all contracts awarded by each Administration of the Department during that fiscal quarter that were awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans.

"(4) The percentage of the total amount of all contracts awarded by each such Administration during that fiscal quarter that were awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans.

"(l) Definitions.—In this section:

"(1) The term 'small business concern' has the meaning given that term under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

"(2) The term 'small business concern owned and controlled by veterans' means a small business concern—

"(A)(i) not less than 51 percent of which is owned by one or more veterans or, in the case of a publicly owned business, not less than 51 percent of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans; and

"(ii) the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans: or

"(B) not less than 51 percent of which is owned by one or more veterans with service-connected disabilities that are permanent and total who are unable to manage the daily business operations of such concern or, in the case of a publicly owned business, not less than 51 percent of the stock of which is owned by one or more such veterans.".

(b) Transition Rule.—A small business concern that is listed in any small business database maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the date of the enactment of this Act shall be presumed to be eligible for inclusion in the database under subsection (f) of section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending one year after the date of the enactment of this Act. Such a small business concern may be removed from the database during that period if it is found not to be a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans (as defined in subsection (l) of such section).

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT AND STUDY.—(1) During the first three fiscal years for which this section is in effect, the Comptroller General shall conduct a study on the efforts made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to meet the contracting goals established pursuant to section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) On January 31 of each year during which the Comptroller General conducts the study under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress an interim report on such study, placing special emphasis on any structural or organizational issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs that might act as an impediment to reaching such contracting goals.

(3) Not later than 90 days after the end of the three-year period during which the Comptroller General conducts the study under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of such study.

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8126 the following new item:

"8127. Small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans; Department contracting goals and preferences."

SEC. 102. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONTRACTING PRIORITY FOR VET-ERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) PRIORITY FOR VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES.—Subchapter II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 101(a), is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§8128. Contracting priority for small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans

"(a) IN GENERAL.—In procuring goods and services pursuant to a contracting preference under this title or any other provision of law, the Secretary shall give priority to a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans, if such business concern also meets the requirements of that contracting preference.

"(b) DEFINITION.—The term 'small business concern owned and controlled by veterans' means a small business concern that is on the list maintained by the Secretary under section 8127(f) of this title."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter, as amended by section 101, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8127 the following new item:

"8128. Contracting priority for small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans.".

SEC. 103. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title and the amendments made by this title shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE II—MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

SEC. 201. ELIGIBILITY OF INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR GRANTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS CEMETERIES ON TRUST LANDS.

Section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

- "(f)(1) The Secretary may make grants under this subsection to any tribal organization to assist the tribal organization in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans' cemeteries on trust land owned by, or held in trust for, the tribal organization.
- "(2) Grants under this subsection shall be made in the same manner, and under the same conditions, as grants to States are made under the preceding provisions of this section.

"(3) In this subsection:

- "(A) The term 'tribal organization' has the meaning given that term in section 3765(4) of this title.
- "(B) The term 'trust land' has the meaning given that term in section 3765(1) of this title.".

 SEC. 202. REPEAL OF EXPIRATION AND EX-
 - PANDED APPLICATION OF DEPART-MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BEN-EFIT FOR GOVERNMENT MARKERS OR HEADSTONES FOR MARKED GRAVES OF VETERANS BURIED IN PRIVATE CEMETERIES.
- (a) REPEAL OF EXPIRATION OF GOVERNMENT MARKER BENEFIT AND OBSOLETE PROVISION.—Section 2306(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraphs (3) and (4).
- (b) APPLICATION OF GOVERNMENT MARKER BENEFIT TO VETERANS DYING ON OR AFTER NO-VEMBER 1, 1990.—Subsection (d) of section 502 of the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-103; 38 U.S.C. 2306 note) is amended by striking "September 11, 2001" and inserting "November 1, 1990".
 - (c) PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES.—
- (1) PROVISION OF HEADSTONES.—Subsection (d) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

- (i) in the first sentence, by inserting "headstone or" after "Government"; and
- (ii) in the second sentence, by inserting "headstone or" before "marker" each place it appears; and
- (B) in paragraph (2), by inserting "headstone or" before "marker".
- (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (g)(3) of such section is amended by inserting "headstone or" before "marker".
- (d) PLACEMENT OF GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES OR MARKERS.—Subsection (d)(1) of such section, as amended by subsection (c), is further amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "If placing the Government headstone or marker on the grave for which it is requested is impossible or impracticable, a headstone or marker may be furnished if the individual making the request for the headstone or marker will be placed within the grounds of the cemetery in which the grave for which the headstone or marker is requested and as close as possible or practicable to that grave."
- (e) Delivery of Government Headstones or Markers.—Subsection (d)(2) of such section, as amended by subsection (c), is further amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: "or to a receiving agent of that cemetery".
- (f) SELECTION OF GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES AND MARKERS.—Subsection (d) of such section, as amended by subsections (a), (c), (d), and (e), is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph (3):
- "(3) The headstone or marker furnished under this subsection shall be the headstone or marker selected by the individual making the request for the headstone or marker from among all the headstones and markers made available by the Government and certified as acceptable for placement.".

(g) RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply as if enacted in section 502 of the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-103; 38 U.S.C. 2306 note).

SEC. 203. PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT MEMORIAL HEADSTONES OR MARKERS AND MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS FOR DECEASED DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF VETERANS WHOSE REMAINS ARE UNAVAILABLE FOR BURIAL.

- (a) PROVISION OF MEMORIAL HEADSTONES OR MARKERS.—Subsection (b) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—
- (1) by adding at the end of paragraph (2) the following new subparagraph:
- "(C) An eligible dependent child of a veteran."; and
- (2) by adding at the end of paragraph (4) the following new subparagraph:
- ''(C) For purposes of this section, the term 'eligible dependent child' means a child—
- "(i) who is under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution; or
- "(ii) who is unmarried and became permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching 21 years of age, or before reaching 23 years of age if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution."
- (b) Addition of Memorial Inscription to Headstone or Marker of Veteran.—Subsection (f) of such section is amended by inserting "or eligible dependent child" after "surviving spouse" both places it appears.
- (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall apply with respect to individuals dying after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE III—VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

SEC. 301. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES.

- (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF GUIDELINES BY SECRETARY.—Section 4107 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:
- "(d) The Secretary shall maintain guidelines for use by States in establishing the professional qualifications required under subclause (IV) of section 4102A(c)(2)(A)(i) of this title for determining the eligibility for employment, and eligibility for the continued employment, of State employees who are designated as disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives under this chapter.".
- (b) SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AS A CONDITION OF STATE RECEIPT OF FUNDS UNDER VETS PROGRAM.—Clause (i) of section 4102A(c)(2)(A) of such title is amended—
- (1) in subclause (II), by striking "and" at the
- (2) in subclause (III), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and
- (3) by adding at the end the following new subclauses:
- "(IV) the professional qualifications used by the State for determining the eligibility for employment, and eligibility for continued employment, of State employees who are designated as disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives under this chapter; and
- "(V) the training required or provided by the State for State employees who are designated as disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives under this chapter.".
- (c) DEADLINE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary of Labor shall establish the guidelines for professional qualifications required by sections 4107(d) of title 38,

United States Code, as added by subsection (a), not later than the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

- (d) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.-
- (1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 4102A of such title, as amended by subsection (b), is further amended—
 - (A) in subsection (c)-
- (i) by striking clause (ii) of paragraph (2)(B) and redesignating clause (iii) as clause (ii); and
- (ii) in paragraph (6)—
- (1) by inserting "(29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.)" after "the Workforce Investment Act of 1998"; and
- (II) by inserting "(29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.)" after "the Wagner-Peyser Act"; and
- (B) in subsection (f)—
- (i) in paragraph (1), by striking "establish and"; and
- (ii) by striking the heading and inserting the following: "PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OUT-COMES MEASURES.—".
- (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by clause (i) of paragraph (1)(A) shall take effect on October 1, 2006.

SEC. 302. RULES FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED VETERANS' OUT-REACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES.

- (a) DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS.—Section 4103A of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:
- "(c) PART-TIME EMPLOYEES.—A part-time disabled veterans' outreach program specialist shall perform the functions of a disabled veterans' outreach program specialist under this section on a half-time basis'"
- (b) LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES.—Section 4104 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:
- "(e) PART-TIME EMPLOYEES.—A part-time local veterans' employment representative shall perform the functions of a local veterans' employment representative under this section on a half-time basis.".
- (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Sections 4103A(c) and 4104(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsections (a) and (b), shall apply with respect to pay periods beginning after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 303. STATE LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS.

- (a) REQUIREMENT AS A CONDITION OF VETS FUNDING.—Section 4102A(c) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 301, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:
- "(8) As a condition of a grant or contract under which funds are made available to a State in order to carry out section 4103A or 4104 of this title, the Secretary shall require the State to provide a licensing and certification program under which a veteran may receive credit toward a license or certification based on training or experience the veteran acquired while serving in the Armed Forces.".
- (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 4102A(c)(8) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply to a grant or contract under which funds are made available to a State in order to carry out section 4103A or 4104 of such title beginning with the second program year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 304. TRAINING OF NEW DISABLED VET-ERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPE-CIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EM-PLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES BY NVTI REQUIRED.

- (a) TRAINING REQUIRED.—Section 4102A(c) of title 38, United States Code, is further amended by adding after paragraph (8), as added by section 303, the following new paragraph:
- "(9)(A) As a condition of a grant or contract under which funds are made available to a State

in order to carry out section 4103A or 4104 of this title, the Secretary shall require the State to require each employee hired by the State who is designated as disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative under this chapter to satisfactorily complete training provided by the National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute during the three-year period that begins on the date on which the employee is so designated.

'(B) For any employee described in subparagraph (A) who does not complete such training during such period, the Secretary may reduce by an appropriate amount the amount made available to the State employing that employee."

(b) SUBMISSION OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING IN-FORMATION REQUIRED.—Section 4102A(c)(2)(A) of such title is amended-

- (1) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and
- (2) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause (iii):
- (iii) For each employee of the State who is designated as disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative under this chapter-

'(I) the date on which the employee is so des-

ianated: and

'(II) whether the employee has satisfactorily completed training provided by the National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute.

(c) APPLICABILITY .-

- (1) APPLICABILITY TO NEW EMPLOYEES.—Paragraph (9) of section 4102A(c) of such title, as added by subsection (a), and clause (iii) of section 4102A(c)(2)(A) of such title, as added by subsection (b), shall apply with respect to a State employee designated as a disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative under chapter 41 of such title who is so designated after the date of the enactment of this Act.
- APPLICABILITY TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES HIRED BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.-The Secretary of Labor shall apply such paragraph to a State employee designated as a disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative under chapter 41 of such title who was so designated during the five-year period before the date of the enactment of this Act by substituting "during the period beginning on the date on which the employee is so designated and ending on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006" for "during the three-year period that begins on the date on which the employee is so designated'

SEC. 305. MATTERS FOR INCLUSION IN ANNUAL REPORT ON VETS PROGRAM.

Section 4107(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended-

- (1) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (6) as paragraphs (10) through (13), respectively; and
- (2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs:

"(3) the number of veterans, disabled veterans, and special disabled veterans who requested training from the public employment

service system:

- '(4) the total number of eligible veterans participating in each program for the provision of employment and training services designed to meet the needs of eligible veterans and eligible persons and the number of such veterans as a percentage of the total number of participants in each such program;
- '(5) for each State, the percentage of persons seeking employment in the State who are veterans;
- '(6) for each State, the number of veterans referred to a small business development center in that State and the number of veterans referred to the National Veterans Business Development Corporation established under section 33 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657c);

- "(7) the total number of such veterans and disabled veterans who remain employed for at least 90 days in such jobs;
- "(8) the number of such veterans and disabled veterans who remain employed for at least 180 days in such jobs;
- '(9) the average starting wage or salary paid to such veterans and disabled veterans and, if applicable, the average wage or salary paid to such veterans and disabled veterans as of the 180th day of employment;"

SEC. 306. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ON CON-TRACTING FOR PLACEMENT OF CER-TAIN DISABLED VETERANS

- (a) Demonstration Project.—Section 4102A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 301, 303, and 304, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:
- '(h) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ON CON-TRACTING FOR PLACEMENT OF VETERANS IN HIGH-UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS.—(1) From unobligated funds made available for a fiscal year to carry out sections 4103A and 4104 of this title, the Secretary of Labor, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, may enter into a contract with a nongovernmental entity to carry out job placement services for veterans during that fiscal year in a locality where the unemployment rate for veterans exceeds the national average unemployment rate.
- "(2) In entering into a contract under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Labor may use procedures other than competitive procedures.
- "(3) In entering into a contract under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Labor shall give priority to a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans that is listed in any small business database maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- "(4) The total amount obligated under contracts entered into under paragraph (1) for any fiscal year may not exceed \$3,000,000.
- (5) The authority to enter into a contract under this subsection shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006.".
- (b) GAO REPORT.—Not later than four years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the demonstration project under subsection (h) of section 4102A of title 38. United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 307. PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF-FICES.

- (a) Provision of Incentives to Employment SERVICE OFFICES.—Section 4112 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—
- (1) in subsection (a)(1)(B), by inserting "and employment service offices" after "recognize eligible employees":
- (2) in subsection (c)-
- (A) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" at the end:
- (B) in paragraph (2)—
 (i) by striking "is" and inserting "in the case of such an award made to an eligible employee, shall be"; and
- (ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: "; and"; and
- (C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:
- "(3) in the case of such an award made to an employment service office, may be used by that employment service office for any purpose.
- (b) Conforming Amendment.—The heading for subsection (c) of such section is amended to read as follows: "ADMINISTRATION AND USE OF AWARDS.—"

SEC. 308. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IMPLEMENTA-TION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS REQUIREMENT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor

shall prescribe regulations to implement section 4215 of title 38, United States Code.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT 309. CREDENTIALING AND LICENSURE OF VETERANS.

OF(a) ESTABLISHMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—Chapter 41 of title 38. United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"84114. Demonstration project credentialing and licensure of veterans

- "(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF DEM-ONSTRATION PROJECT.—The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training shall out a demonstration project credentialing in accordance with this section for the purpose of facilitating the seamless transition of members of the Armed Forces from service on active duty to civilian employment.
- '(b) CREDENTIALING AND LICENSURE OF VET-ERANS.—(1) The Assistant Secretary shall select not less than ten military occupational specialties for purposes of the demonstration project. Each such speciality selected by the Assistant Secretary shall require a skill or set of skills that is required for civilian employment in an industry with high growth or high worker de-
- '(2) The Assistant Secretary shall consult with appropriate Federal, State, and industry officials to identify requirements for credentials, certifications, and licenses that require a skill or set of skills required by a military occupational specialty identified under paragraph (1).
- '(3) The Assistant Secretary shall analyze the requirements identified under paragraph (2) to determine which requirements may be satisfied by the skills, training, or experience acquired by members of the Armed Forces with the military occupational specialties selected under paragraph (1).
- (c) ELIMINATION OFBARRIERSCREDENTIALING AND LICENSURE.—The Assistant Secretary shall cooperate with appropriate Federal, State, and industry officials to reduce or eliminate any barriers to providing a credential, certification, or license to a veteran who acquired any skill, training, or experience while serving as a member of the Armed Forces with a military occupational specialty selected under subsection (b)(1) that satisfies the Federal and State requirements for the credential, certification, or license.
- "(d) TASK FORCE.—The Assistant Secretary may establish a task force of individuals with appropriate expertise to provide assistance to the Assistant Secretary in carrying out this sec-
- "(e) Consultation.—In carrying out this section, the Assistant Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, appropriate Federal and State officials, private-sector employers, labor organizations, and industry trade associations.
- "(f) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—For purposes of carrying out any part of the demonstration project under this section, the Assistant Secretary may enter into a contract with a public or private entity with appropriate expertise.
- (g) PERIOD OF PROJECT.—The Assistant Secretary shall carry out the demonstration project under this section during the period beginning on the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this section and ending on September 30, 2009.
- '(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS -There are authorized to be appropriated to the Assistant Secretary to carry out this section \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through
- (b) Membership of Advisory Committee on VETERANS EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND EM-PLOYER OUTREACH.—Section 4110(c)(1)(A) of such title is amended-
- (1) by striking "Six" and inserting "Seven"; and
- (2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(vii) The National Governors Association.".
(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 41 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"4114. Demonstration project on credentialing and licensure of veterans.".

TITLE IV—EDUCATION

SEC. 401. EXCEPTION FOR INSTITUTIONS OFFER-ING GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED NONACCREDITED COURSES TO RE-QUIREMENT OF REFUNDING UN-USED TUTTION.

Section 3676(c)(13) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "prior to completion" and all that follows and inserting the following: "before completion and—

"(A) in the case of an institution other than (i) a Federal, State, or local Government institution or (ii) an institution described in subparagraph (B), such policy provides that the amount charged to the eligible person for tuition, fees, and other charges for a portion of the course shall not exceed the approximate pro rata portion of the total charges for tuition, fees, and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the course bears to its total length; and

"(B) in the case of an institution that is a nonaccredited public educational institution, the institution has and maintains a refund policy regarding the unused portion of tuition, fees, and other charges that is substantially the same as the refund policy followed by accredited public educational institutions located within the same State as such institution."

SEC. 402. EXTENSION OF WORK-STUDY ALLOW-ANCE.

Section 3485(a)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 27, 2006" each place it appears and inserting "June 30, 2007"

SEC. 403. REPORT ON IMPROVEMENT IN ADMINIS-TRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSIST-ANCE BENEFITS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the administration of education benefits under chapters 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, and 36 of title 38, United States Code, and chapters 1606 and 1607 of title 10, United States Code, that proposes methods to streamline the processes and procedures of administering such benefits.

SEC. 404. RESTORATION OF LOST ENTITLEMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD TO DIS-CONTINUE A COURSE OF EDU-CATION BECAUSE OF BEING OR-DERED TO FULL-TIME NATIONAL GUARD DUTY.

(a) RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3511(a)(2)(B)(i) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after "title 10" the following: "or of being involuntarily ordered to full-time National Guard duty under section 502(f) of title 32".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a payment of educational assistance allowance made after September 11, 2001.

SEC. 405. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

Section 3485 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

- (1) in subsection (a)(4)(E), by inserting "or 1607" after "chapter 1606";
- (2) in subsection (b), by striking "chapter 106" and inserting "chapter 1606 or 1607"; and
- (3) in subsection (e)(1)—
- (A) by striking "services of the kind described in clauses (A) through (E) of subsection (a)(1) of this section" and inserting "a qualifying workstudy activity described in subsection (a)(4)"; and
- (B) by striking "chapter 106" and inserting "chapter 1606 or 1607".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I start out again by thanking my friend from Colorado for his work on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3082, as amended, the Veterans Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006.

Title I of this bill improves the status of veteran and disabled veteran small businesses when competing for contracts at the Department of Veterans Affairs. It would be a reasonable expectation, Madam Speaker, that of all the Federal Government's agencies, the Department of Veterans Affairs would be a leader in achieving the President's goal for annual procurement from at least 3 percent disabled veteran-owned businesses. Sadly, not. Our most recent data from fiscal year 2005 indicates that VA did barely over half of what the President asked and public law required.

Deficient as it is, VA's record beats many other agencies, including the Department of Defense. According to the Small Business Administration, only three of 81 Federal agencies met the President's 3 percent goal.

H.R. 3082, as amended, would require the VA Secretary to establish annual contracting goals for small businesses owned and controlled by veterans and service-disabled veterans. The goal for service-disabled veterans shall not be less than 3 percent.

The Department of Veterans Affairs would also be required under title I to maintain and validate a database of small businesses owned by veterans and disabled veterans.

The bill would clarify veterans small business competition rules for contracts worth less than \$5 million.

Veteran and service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses would be given priority in VA contracting, as well as priority among other set-aside groups eligible for preferential treatment under the Small Business Act.

Title I of the bill would allow a business' status as a veteran or disabled veteran-owned small business to continue for a period of 10 years following the death of the veteran owner if the surviving spouse owns the business.

Under title II of the bill, tribal governments would be allowed to participate in VA's State Cemetery Grants Program. This program, which dates back to 1978, complements the Department's national cemetery system. Tribal governments, however, are not eligible to participate. This bill would correct that deficiency and help recognize the unexcelled service of Native

Americans in our Nation's Armed Forces by facilitating the establishment of veterans' cemeteries on trust land.

Title II contains a provision that would permanently authorize the VA Secretary to provide the family of a veteran interred in a private cemetery with a government marker in addition to any headstone the family may have provided.

Congress had given the Secretary a 5-year authority effective for deaths that occurred as of September 11, 2001. This bill would also expand the benefit to include veterans who died between November 1, 1990, and September 10, 2001. This provision would also permit the Secretary to offer a headstone in lieu of a marker, if the family so requests.

The simple elegance of the veteran's marker, used since just after our Civil War in American cemeteries from Arlington to Normandy, holds a sacred place in the hearts of many veterans and families.

On behalf of Chairman Buyer, I want to thank a tireless supporter of our veterans—Representative Nancy Johnson of Connecticut—for her perseverance and leadership in working to ensure families the availability of this unique symbol of service to our country.

Title III of this bill contains provisions affecting the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Title III would require the Veterans Employment Training Service, otherwise known as VETS, to establish nonmandatory guidelines for disabled veterans outreach program specialists and local veterans employment representatives qualifications.

The bill would clarify that part-time employment of DVOPS and LVERs is half-time employment and require that DVOPS and LVERs hired after date of enactment to successfully complete training by the National Veterans Training Institute within 3 years of appointment. States would be required to develop a licensing and certification program for veterans within 2 years of enactment under title III of the bill.

A 5-year demonstration project would be authorized to allow Department of Labor VETS to enter into contracts with nongovernmental entities to carry out employment services in high unemployment areas using unobligated funds and require GAO to report on the demonstration project.

Finally, title III would establish a 3-year demonstration project to identify not less than 10 military occupational specialties that would lead to State licensing and authorize \$1 million for the fiscal years 2007 through 2009.

The final title of the bill would make modification to the veterans' education programs.

Title IV would clarify pro rata refund policy for nonaccredited educational institutions; extend authorization for work-study positions located at veterans cemeteries, State veterans homes, and State approving agencies through June 30, 2007. It would further require the VA to report on methods to improve and streamline the administrative processes and procedures of education programs in chapters 30 through 36, and restore lost entitlement for certain chapter 35 education beneficiaries forced to discontinue a course of education due to being called to full-time National Guard duty.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3082. as amended, the Veterans Small Business Administration and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006. This bill incorporates a host of important measures aimed at improving employment and small business opportunities for servicemembers and veterans, as well as provisions to enhance the VA's capability to honorably memorialize our fallen soldiers and heroes and comfort their families.

I would like to thank Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member LANE EVANS for their leadership in the full committee, as well as all of my colleagues on the full committee for their assistance in moving this bill to the floor today.

I especially want to express my appreciation to the chairman and ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, Congressman JOHN BOOZMAN of Arkansas and Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth of South Dakota, for all their hard work and bipartisan leadership on the subcommittee this session.

I look forward to the committee beginning discussions with the Senate to ensure passage of a bipartisan, bicameral veterans' benefits package for this year. I know that the veterans of my State of Colorado and all the veterans of this great country will appreciate the important benefits and memorial improvements that we have included in this legislative measure.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3082, as amended, incorporates important provisions from a number of Members interested in improving the quality of life of our veterans. Specifically, this legislation would provide greater incentives for the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to improve its performance with respect to contracting with veteran-owned small businesses.

It would enhance employment counseling, job training and credentialing services for servicemembers transitioning out of the military and seeking to enter the civilian workforce. The legislation also seeks to improve the veterans' education claims processing system.

Additionally, in the area of memorial affairs, the bill would authorize the VA to provide State cemetery grants to tribal governments seeking to establish, expand or improve State veterans cemeteries. And finally, it would make permanent the VA's authority to provide headstones and markers for veterans interred in private cemeteries.

Madam Speaker, the VA National Cemetery Administration consistently ranks as one of the best agencies in government. We, in Congress, must continue to do all we can to assist NCA to remain at the top.

Madam Speaker, I support H.R. 3082, as amended, and appreciate the work of the committee and the staff in developing these measures in a bipartisan and professional manner. The servicemembers, veterans and military families of this Nation have earned and deserve our best efforts here in Congress. Indeed, they deserve even more.

I urge all the Members to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON), and recognize her for her hard work on this issue.

JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mrs. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill and particularly to thank him and to thank the chairman, Mr. BUYER, and the subcommittee chairman. Mr. MILLER, for the work they have done to address the needs of our veterans and to accommodate the measures of myself and other colleagues' ideas we have brought to your attention in this bill.

I am particularly grateful that you have included my bill in this reauthorization and will extend a provision for government furnished grave markers, because this bill arises from the experience of my constituents and the distress of families I represent at the demise of an old benefit for at least a certain number of years.

The grave marker benefit enables all veterans to receive a headstone or grave marker commemorating their service to our country, at no cost to their families. There was a time when this benefit was available to all veterans, and then it was not available for a variety of reason, although it was uneven. It was available to some veterans and not others because of the regulatory complexity of the governing of a simple benefit.

In 2001, it was enacted and 7.500 families nationwide took advantage of this provision, and that number continues to grow each year.

One of the families that was enabled to benefit after 2001 was the family of Agostino Guzzo, a World War II veteran from my home State of Connecticut, who inspired the legislation in 2001 and who has inspired this legislation that we pass here today as part of this larger bill. It was his son that brought to my attention the quirk in the law and law procedures that was allowing some veterans, while denying other veterans an enduring recognition of their service to our country.

Like you, I remain committed to providing America's veterans with bene-

fits that fully recognize the sacrifices these men and women made in defense of our Nation. Our gratitude should be expressed not only in the education and employment benefits we provide them in life, but also through permanent remembrance of their service that we provide upon their passing.

I thank the committee for including the grave marker provision in this bill, and I thank Secretary Nicholson and the VA for offering it their enthusiastic endorsement.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in passing this important benefit for America's veterans as part of this larger upgrading of other veterans benefits.

I thank you for allowing me this opportunity, and I thank the committee for its vigilance by Members on both sides of the aisle in regard to the interests of our veterans and the everchanging needs of them as they age and as the shape of their lives change.

So I thank you, I thank the staff Members, and I appreciate this opportunity to support this bill.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 3 minutes to a valued member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, the distinguished gentleman from New Mexico (TOM UDALL).

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend and neighbor, the gentleman from Colorado, and I rise today in support of today's veterans legislation, specifically H.R. 3082, which includes the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act, legislation I introduced early last year.

I would like to thank House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS for their leadership on H.R. 3082. I would also like to personally thank committee staff member Mary Ellen McCarthy for her tireless work on this and other important veterans issues, and thank my legislative assistant, Pablo Duran, for his hard work on this bill.

One of the missions of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide the men and women of the U.S. Armed Services with a final resting place, a mission accomplished through the 122 national cemeteries maintained by the VA. In addition, a State grant program through the VA allows for construction of State cemeteries, thereby giving most veterans a chance to be laid to rest close to home.

However, many Native American veterans who live on tribal lands do not have such an opportunity. This legislation would change that. Tribal governments would be put on the same footing as States, consistent with tribal sovereignty, by allowing them to apply for grants to establish, expand, and improve tribal veterans cemeteries.

In addition to many cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, the legislation enjoys the support of the Navajo Nation, the State legislatures of Arizona and New Mexico, the National American Indian Veterans organization, and

the VA itself. In fact, VA Secretary Nicholson stated that this legislation "would create another means of accommodating the burial needs of Native American veterans who wish to be buried in tribal lands." I couldn't agree more.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support allowing Native American veterans the chance to be buried on tribal lands, close to their ancestors and with the full dignity and honor they earned through their service. I am hopeful that my legislation, through H.R. 3082, will be fully supported by this body.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I close by commending the work of the chairman of the committee, Chairman BUYER, Ranking Member EVANS, Acting Ranking Member FILNER, and my colleagues Mr. SALAZAR and Mr. UDALL for their hard work on this legislation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Veterans Affairs Committee on a bipartisan basis, not only for their hard work on this bill, but the two prior bills we have discussed this afternoon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3082, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 3082, as amended

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank my colleague from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) for his tireless efforts in addressing the veterans issues of this great country.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support legislation that I introduced, H.R. 3082, the Veteran Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006. This is an important piece of legislation that will improve veterans' benefits programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of the provisions that would enhance small business and employment opportunities for veterans.

This bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to give priority to small businesses owned by veterans and service-disabled veterans when awarding contracts, even when contracting officers choose to use another set aside authority such as 8(a) or HUBZones

Madam Speaker, there have been previous attempts to promote veteranowned small businesses to the Federal agencies. Public Laws 106–50 and 108–183 set goals and set aside opportuni-

ties for federal agencies. Additionally, Executive Order 13360 encouraged Federal agencies to meet the goals for veteran-owned businesses.

Unfortunately, agencies have not been successful in meeting the goals. It is truly regrettable that according to Small Business Administration data that only three of eighty-one Federal departments and agencies have met the three percent goal currently in law for service-disabled veteran-owned business. VA was not one of those three, I feel VA must set an example for the rest of the government.

I want to make it plain that the intent of this bill is to put veteran-owned businesses, especially service-disabled veteran-owned businesses at the front of the line for set aside opportunities at the Department of Veterans Affairs. This is a small way for the nation to show its appreciation for not only the service these men and women have rendered to the nation, but also for their entrepreneurial spirit that drives our economy.

Many servicemembers, upon leaving the Armed Forces, seek employment within a field similar to their occupational specialties. However, there are several barriers that veterans may face when trying to be certified in these fields in their home states.

When we marked up this legislation in the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, of which I chair, I inserted in my Chairman's Amendment, a provision that would require states to develop a licensing and certification program as a condition of receiving a grant from the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). The states will have 2 years after the date enactment to do this.

It is also important for the people assisting veterans with employment to have the proper qualifications and training to meet the needs of veterans. Therefore, my Chairman's Amendment also included a provision that would require VETS to establish guidelines for non-mandatory professional qualifications for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). This bill would also require that all DVOPS and LVERs successfully complete training by the National Veterans' Training Institute

Madam Speaker, veterans as a group is one of this nation's largest assets. Their small businesses are very successful and they have proven to be excellent employees. The employment and entrepreneurial tools within H.R. 3082 would give our veterans the "legup" that they deserve.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3082, as amended.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3082, the Veterans Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act of 2006. I would also like to commend my good

friend from my home state of Arkansas, Mr. BOOZMAN, for his leadership on this important and timely topic.

The Small Business Association believes that approximately 4 million small businesses in the United States are owned by veterans. Many of the 4 million veteran owned businesses are owned by veterans that were permanently disabled while serving this country. This legislation makes a step toward paying our debt to America's veterans by ensuring that veterans are not overlooked by the Small Business Administration. H.R. 3082 requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish annual contracting goals for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enter into with small businesses owned and controlled by veterans and service-disabled veterans. The goal for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses would not be less than three percent.

Additionally, H.R. 3082 makes strides toward ensuing that our veterans receive important employment training services to meet the needs of our increasingly technologically driven economy. I am a strong believer in the utility of employment training and will continue to work in the Committee on Education and the Workforce to expand employment training so that we remain competitive in the 21st century. I hope that the efficacy of vocational training will once again be demonstrated by this program and that this body will invest sufficiently in employment training programs. Improved job skills make a real difference for both workers and our economy.

Ms HERSETH. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the Veterans' Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act, H.R. 3082. I also would like to thank Rep. JOHN BOOZMAN, the Chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, for his leadership on the small business provisions included in this bill.

As the Ranking Member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, I am proud to have helped develop and strongly support the education, training, and employment measures contained in H.R. 3082.

These provisions are intended to improve veterans' small-business opportunities, jobtraining, and employment services, as well as the licensing and certification process for servicemembers transitioning into the civilian workforce.

Our nation's servicemembers, veterans and military families have earned the benefits and opportunities provided within this legislation. Again, I am pleased to support the measures contained in the Veterans' Small Business and Memorial Affairs Act and encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, the provisions in title two originated in the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

Section 201 would allow tribal governments to participate in the State Cemetery Grants Program to establish, expand, and improve veterans' cemeteries on trust lands.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery system. VA will pay for the construction costs, and states are responsible for providing the land and ongoing operating and maintenance expenses.

There are currently 60 state cemeteries and two under construction, and states are planning to open 18 new state veterans' cemeteries between 2007 and 2010.

Owing to the success of the State Cemetery Grants Program, Congress made it permanent in Public Law 108-183. However, tribal governments are not considered eligible for these cemetery grants. This section will provide Native American veterans the opportunity to be buried in a veterans' cemetery on trust land.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank Representative Tom Udall, a member of the Subcommittee, for bringing this issue to our attention so we could include it in the bill under consideration today.

Section 202 would make permanent the Secretary's authority to furnish a government marker for veterans interred in a marked grave at a private cemetery, as well as offering a headstone in lieu of a marker, if requested by the family. The headstone or marker would be placed on the grave, or as close to it as practicable.

The current five-year authority, which was effective for deaths that occurred as of September 11, 2001, expires on December 31st of this year. Prior to this authority, if a veteran was buried at a private cemetery and the family purchased a private headstone, the veteran was ineligible for a government marker.

We would also expand the benefit to include veterans who died between November 1, 1990 and September 10, 2001.

I want to recognize Representative Nancy Johnson, who has been championing this cause for over five years. I appreciate her working with the Subcommittee to ensure that veterans and their families continue to have access to symbolic expressions of remembrance.

Finally, section 203 would authorize the Secretary to permit the placement of a memorial headstone or marker in a national cemetery when a child's remains are unavailable for burial.

If feasible, VA would be authorized to add a memorial inscription to a veteran's headstone rather than providing a separate marker for the minor child.

Currently, VA may provide a memorial headstone or marker for a veteran, spouse, or surviving spouse when remains are unavailable.

However, if a spouse and child die at the same time and in the same manner, and the remains for neither are available, a veteran cannot receive a memorial headstone honoring the child. This section would correct an inequity in current law. Since 2002, VA has received three such requests.

I want to thank Ms. BERKLEY, the other members of the Subcommittee, and staff on both sides of the aisle for their work on the provisions incorporated in title two of the amendment. I also thank Chairman BUYER, Ranking Member Evans, and Acting Ranking Member Filner for their continued leadership.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3082, as amended.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. Bradley) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3082, as amended.

The question was taken: and (twothirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38. United States Code, to make improvements to small business, memorial affairs, education, and employment programs for veterans, and for other purposes.".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

S. 1496, by the yeas and nays;

S. 203, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 5534, by the yeas and navs.

The first and third electronic votes will be conducted as 15-minute votes. The second vote in this series will be a 5-minute vote.

ELECTRONIC DUCK STAMP ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the Senate bill, S. 1496.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WAL-DEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill. S. 1496, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 358, nays 4, not voting 70, as follows:

[Roll No. 394]

YEAS-358

Abercrombie Emerson Ackerman English (PA) Aderholt Eshoo Etheridge Akin Alexander Farr Fattah Allen Ferguson Raird Fitzpatrick (PA) Baker Foley Baldwin Forbes Barrett (SC) Fortenberry Barrow Fossella. Bartlett (MD) Foxx Barton (TX) Frank (MA) Frelinghuysen Bass Bean Garrett (NJ) Berkley Gerlach Berry Gilchrest Biggert Gillmor Bilirakis Gingrey Bishop (GA) Gohmert Bishop (NY) Gonzalez Blackburn Goode Goodlatte Blumenauer Gordon Boehlert Granger Boehner Graves Bonilla Green, Al Bonner Green, Gene Grijalva Bono Boozman Gutknecht Boren Hall Boswell Hart Boucher Hastings (FL) Boustany Hastings (WA) Bradley (NH) Hayes Brady (PA) Hayworth Brown (SC) Hensarling Brown-Waite, Herger Ginny Higgins Burgess Hinchev Burton (IN) Hobson Butterfield Holden Buver Holt Hooley Calvert Camp (MI) Hoyer Campbell (CA) Hulshof Cantor Capito Hyde Inglis (SC) Capps Capuano Cardin Israel Jackson (IL) Cardoza Carnahan Jenkins Castle Jindal Johnson (CT) Chabot Chandler Johnson (IL) Johnson E B Chocola. Cleaver Jones (NC) Jones (OH) Clyburn Coble Kanjorski Cole (OK) Kaptur Conaway Keller Convers Kellv Cooper Kennedy (MN) Costa Kennedy (RI) Kildee Cramer Crenshaw Kind Crowley King (IA) Cubin Kirk Cuellar Kline Cummings Knollenberg Davis (AL) Kolbe Kucinich Davis (IL) Davis (KY Kuhl (NY) Davis (TN) LaHood Davis, Tom Langevin Deal (GA) Lantos Larsen (WA) DeFazio Larson (CT) DeGette Delahunt Latham DeLauro LaTourette Dent Leach Diaz-Balart, L. Lee Levin Diaz-Balart, M. Dicks Lewis (CA) Dingell Lewis (GA) Doggett Lewis (KY) Doolittle Linder Lipinski Doyle LoBiondo Dreier Lofgren, Zoe Duncan Lowey Edwards Lucas Ehlers Lungren, Daniel Emanuel

Ε.

Salazar

Lvnch Maloney Manzullo Marchant Markey Marshall Matsui McCarthy McCollum (MN) McCotter McCrery McDermott McGovern McHenry McHugh McIntyre McKeon McMorris McNulty Meehan Meek (FL) Meeks (NY) Melancon Mica Michaud Miller (FL) Miller (MI) Miller (NC) Miller, Gary Miller, George Mollohan Moore (KS) Moore (WI) Moran (KS) Murphy Murtha Musgrave Myrick Nadler Napolitano Neal (MA) Neugebauer Ney Northup Norwood Nunes Oberstar Obev Olver Osborne Otter Owens Pallone Pascrell Pastor Payne Pearce Pelosi Pence Peterson (MN) Peterson (PA) Petri Pickering Pitts Platts Poe Pombo Pomeroy Porter Price (GA) Price (NC) Pryce (OH) Putnam Radanovich Rahall Ramstad Rangel Regula Rehberg Reichert Reyes Reynolds Rogers (AL) Rogers (MI) Rohrabacher Ros-Lehtinen Ross Rothman Roybal-Allard Rovce Ruppersberger Ryan (OH) Rvan (WI) Ryun (KS)